



# CRUISE WINNERS IN *The Brooklyn Bride* BACK PAGES

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# The Brooklyn Paper

Including The Brooklyn Heights Paper, Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill Paper, DUMBO Paper, Fort Greene-Clinton Hill Paper and Downtown News



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# Public packs Ratner meet

## Carroll Pk pest fest Gardeners stage an awareness-raising 'Rat Day'

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Papers

Using the city's "It's My Park Day" as an opportunity to draw attention to the presence of pests in their neighborhood park space, the Committee to Improve Carroll Park on Saturday held what they called "The First (And Hopefully Last) Rat Festival."

Rather than celebrate with the more tulip plantings and ribbon cuttings for new trash cans, as is typical of the city-wide celebration, supporters of the park on Smith Street between Union and President streets, highlighted the "ratus neognicus," or eastern Norway rat, one of the rodent species that residents have reported romping in the children's playground, sandbox, and picnic areas.

"They climb up the trees and swing on the branches," said Committee member Katie Kelly. "I've never seen anything like it."

The Committee canned the day's plantings in hopes of drawing attention to a more serious problem that has already cost them one irritated homeowner: July rats gnawed right through a hose in one of the park gardens — plenty of flower petals and a decent share of nerves.

"I stepped into the garden and then there were six rats running around at my feet," recounted Committee President Sam Weber.

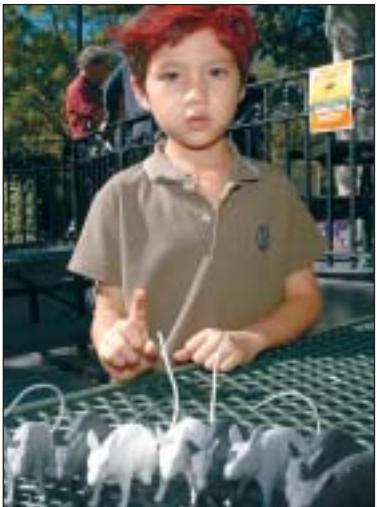
"Why would we want to go out and stick our hands in the dirt when it's infested like that?" he said.

The Committee does not blame the Parks Department for the rat invasion. Parks employees bat every 10 days, they say. "The problem is being fed by some bigger, citywide problem," said Weber.

The park sits directly above an F and G lines subway station, a breeding ground for rats, say residents, and nearby restaurants and public schools leave trash bags outside for collection, providing easy meals for the rodent.

Earlier this fall, the Committee and Community Board 6 asked Mayor Michael Bloomberg to establish a task force dedicated to ridding the city of the frightening and disease-causing pests.

Neighbors have also complained to Councilman Bill DeBlasio and Assemblywoman Joann Millman, whose district office sits right across Smith Street from the park, about rat feasts left trailing from the trash bags left next to PS 32, on the corner of President and Hoyt Street.



Azen Yanagawa shows off the toy rats he won during a scavenger hunt at "It's My Rat Day" in Carroll Park last Saturday.

"The sidewalk is stained with gravy, milk anything that's in the cafeteria that's liquid," said resident Martha Boardman, noting that the number of dining rats had declined since Department of Sanitation cleanups of the site increased this fall.

"But it's only because someone on the street knew someone in the department," she added.

Though DeBlasio had last year secured funding to install Dumpsters on the corner, the process was halted by a Department of Education policy that does not allow the large trash receptacles on school grounds due to safety concerns.

"We are still looking for a solution that works for everyone," said a spokesman for the councilman.

Weber speculates that the park's rat problem was aggravated by construction projects in the area.

By 11 am, the Committee's goal to involve multiple city agencies in solving the rat problem had been at least partially realized, with city

See RAT PACK on page 6

## Drop in Heights crime

By Lilo H. Stanton

The Brooklyn Papers

Maybe you've noticed it in this newspaper's police blotter, or anecdotally from neighborhood gossip, but serious crime in Brooklyn Heights is way down.

Police in the 84th Precinct, which also includes Downtown Brooklyn, DUMBO, Vinegar Hill and Brooklyn Hill, saw an unseasoned drop in what they classed as "violent crimes" during the third week of September, when compared to last year. Crimes in the neighboring 76th Precinct were also down significantly.

Between Sept. 19 and Sept. 25, the 84th Precinct recorded 60 incidents, about two-thirds fewer murders, rapes, robberies, felonious assaults, burglaries, grand larcenies and auto thefts than occurred during the same week in 2004, according to data compiled by the police department.

In the 76th Precinct, which includes Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill and Red Hook, such reports declined by nearly half.

Overall, the city continues to be a safer city-wide, including many parts of Brooklyn. But police at the 84th Precinct said they couldn't recall such a significant, single-week decline in many years. City-wide reports from that week declined by just over 5 percent compared to last year.

According to the city's CompStat program, which tracks complaints, from January through Sept. 25, reports of such incidents in the 84th Precinct dropped 3.5 percent from last year.

Leslie Lewis, president of the 84th Precinct Community Council, credits the commanding officer, Capt. Philip Serrazza, for many of the successes. Serrazza has fewer cops on patrol with than more crime-ridden precincts, Lewis said, and CompStat dropped police officials target neighborhood trouble.

See CRIME on page 6



## He likes Mike

Crossing party lines, Borough President Marty Markowitz (left), a Democrat, endorsed Mayor Michael Bloomberg's re-election bid, during a gathering at Borough Hall on Sunday. The Republican mayor is squaring off against Democrat Fernando Ferrer in the Nov. 8 election. Markowitz had supported Ferrer's opponent, Gifford Miller in the Democratic Primary.

Photo: Brooklyn Paper / AP Wirephoto

## Hundreds cheer & jeer Atlantic Yards project

The Brooklyn Papers

The boos of dissenters and jeers of supporters resounded throughout a packed Downtown Brooklyn auditorium last night as the state agency leading developer Bruce Ratner's proposed Atlantic Yards project heard testimony in the first of two public hearings on the plan.

A representative from the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC), who also acted as a moderator, was heated and noisy environmental scorcher, haranguing, listened to five hours of public testimony, and spent much of that time calling for order from audience members.

The 800-seat auditorium at the New York College of Technology,



Bruce Ratner

285 Jay St., was for the most part filled, but many attendees milled around in the lobby or talked out front with elected officials and reporters.

Inside, testimony was heated, and a buzzing audience grew rowdy.

Among the selected officials who testified, Brooklyn Heights-Park Slope Assemblywoman Joann Millman made her first public statement against the project.

She cited the problems that 18,000 new residents could create for the borough's sewer capacity, sunken streets, fire and fire personnel, and parking spaces.

"Thus far I have yet to see a detailed and adequate plan that will address such concerns, and I am not convinced the Environmental Impact Statement does so," she said, while many of the project's opponents clapped or whispered a surprised response at the Brownstone Brooklyn legislator's position.

She mentioned that her jurisdiction now includes part of the site's boundary, since the development's expansion to a fifth site, over an existing Model's sporting goods store and P.C. Richards electronics store, was within the Park Slope portion of the district.

"While I am not specifically opposed to the development along Flatbush Avenue, I believe it is in excess in light of the already massive construction planned at the yards," Millman said.

She called for more community input, for Ratner's Forest City Ratner Companies to hire a community consultant, and cited her opposition to the use of eminent domain seizure of private property for the plan.

The government takeover of private property should be a last resort and never implemented for private gain," she said.

"Additionally, if state approval is needed to use eminent domain, I will not support it, and I will ask See CASH on page 7

## Ratner exec admits funding supporters

The Brooklyn Papers

A top Forest City Ratner official for the first time this week acknowledged that the development company has been paying large sums of money to organizations offering what they've presented as grassroots neighborhood support for the proposed Atlantic Yards development.

As reported by The Brooklyn Papers two weeks ago, Brooklyn United for Innovative Local Development (BUILD) reported on its non-profit tax filing that it would receive \$5 million from developer Bruce Ratner.

Dated Dec. 20, 2004, the 501(c)(3) foundation completed six months before a so-called "conservation easement" (C.E.) in an environmental pact between the developer and supportive community groups, was announced.

BUILD President James Caldwell was paying \$125,000 a year and two other BUILD executives — Marie Louis and Shalawn Langhorne — each receive \$100,000 a year, according to the IRS filing.

Forest City Ratner Executive Vice President James Stuckey, who is the Atlantic Yards project manager, defended his company's dealings with BUILD.

See CASH on page 7

## Tough cell Slopers, Ridgites rip phone towers

By Ariella Cohen

The Brooklyn Papers

A dispute between shareholders in a Park Slope co-op apartment building and the co-op's board of directors over a plan to lease roof space to cell phone companies for a series of relay towers has caught the attention of state Attorney General Eliot Spitzer.

The co-op board voted last April to authorize the installation of six antennas and a base station by cell phone service provider T-Mobile on the roof of their building at 130 Eighth Ave. in Carroll Street.

A group calling itself Concerned Shareholders of 130 Eighth Avenue hired a lawyer and on Oct. 14 got a temporary restraining order blocking the planned 17 placement of the antenna system. They also contacted the city's Office of Emergency Management.

Bruce Malone, a spokesman for the attorney general, this week confirmed that documents from the Concerned Shareholders group had been received and were under consideration for further investigation.

At the core of the co-op dwellers' concern is worry over potential health risks from the antennas, mirroring a battle being waged in Bay Ridge, where a group of residents are fighting to stop the installation of an apartment building on Fourth Avenue. On Thursday, Oct. 20, a Brooklyn Supreme Court judge was scheduled to hear that group's plea to extend a restraining order currently stalling the installation of an antenna and base station atop 830 Fourth Ave. at 83rd Street.

Spurred by Republican state Sen. Marty Golden and activist Pat Russo, a Republican candidate for City Council, the lawsuit alleges that the developer of 830 Fourth Ave. did not give proper notification of the installation to neighbors, including the St. Anselm's Catholic school, across the street.

With a tip-off from worried St. Anselm's parents, Golden initially interrupted Russo's Oct. 14 hearing with the contractors at the site that no one in the neighborhood had been told of their work plans. The frustrated workers attempting to install a several-ton, lead-lined base station thought that they were there for a day.

The Nextel workers high-tailed it out of there that See CELLS on page 6



PAGE 9

BAM's French film fest begins

# Concerns over Gowanus development

By Ariella Cohen

Brooklyn Paper

A plan to convert a former factory on the Gowanus Canal into an apartment building has area residents, businesses and community board members up in arms.

At issue is not just concern that industry will push out of the canal area, although that seems to be the greater worry based on community com-

ments, but also that remediation of the long-polluted soil will not be properly handled.

Lingering questions about the zoning variance application to allow developers convert 255 Baltic St., into a 53-unit residential apartment building delayed a Sept. 29 vote on the matter at a hearing before the Community Board 6 Land Use committee. That panel will revisit the topic this Thursday, Oct. 27, at 6 pm, at the St. Mary's Residence, 41

Fifth St., between Hoyt and Baltic Streets, and is expected to make a recommendation to the full board.

At the previous hearing, community members argued that the conversion would jeopardize the area's industrial character by setting a precedent for residential development—planting the seeds for

disputes over workday noise and grime in an area that is rezoned exclusively for manufacturing, based around the long-polluted canal.

"The conversion opens the argument that residential is the direction the canal is taking," said Maureen Donnelly, a member of the group Friends and Neighbors of Greater

Gowanus. The Land Use Committee voted in favor of such a variance once before, approving an application to rezone 460 Union St. against opposition from neighbors who petitioned to keep the site zoned for manufacturing.

In March, CB6 hosted a similarly contentious public

meeting between community members and the planning board of Gowanus, Inc., a 450-unit residential development slated to rise on land bounded by Carroll Street, First Street, Third Avenue and the muddy waterway's Lateral Canal, also known as the First Street basin.

On both that project — a

former fuel processing plant and the one proposed for Butler Street, Donnelly's group argued that ground pollution incurred over decades of industrial use must be remediated before residential plans are put forward.

"We are putting the cart before the horse," said Donnelly.

By putting residential development here now will be stepping in the way of [environmental restoration] projects?"

In 2000, The Army Corps of Engineers began a feasibility study assessing how to best clean and restore the contaminated channel. While the cleanup is expected to be completed this year, the Army Corps is still finishing its testing of the soil.

But

in the end, The Army Corps hopes to restore wetlands along the banks of the canal and dredge the waterway's contaminated silt.

"We are looking to restore aquatic communities," said Thomas J. Shea III, project manager for the Corps.

"A lot of what happens on the land won't affect the sediment life, but we are interested in knowing where those projects are so we can build accordingly."

So far, community groups

know precious little of either cleanup efforts or development plans.

"Everything with the Gowanus plans has been quiet, quiet," said Maria

Pagano, president of Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association.

"Part of our frustration with the cleanup process is that we don't hear from the state [Department of Environmental Conservation] directly," said CB6 district manager Craig Hammernick.

In July, DEC, through its Brownfield Cleanup Program, approved Gowanus Village I LLC's plan to clean the site of the former power plant west of Third Avenue between Carroll and Third streets. Under the DEC Brownfields Cleanup program, the development group, a partnership that includes developer Shaya Boymelgreen and Africa-Israel Investments principals Lev Levitt, will be reimbursed by the state for 15 percent of their testing and cleanup costs.

Another Brownfields application, for a site at 430 Carroll St., is now under review by the DEC.

On Oct. 14, the public review and comment period for the Gowanus Village abatement plan was extended another 30 days after complaints by members of FROGG that the information had not been made properly accessible.

Information sheets are

available for viewing at the Brooklyn Public Library's Carroll Gardens branch, at 336 Clinton St., and at the CB6 offices, 250 Baltic St., until Nov. 14.

## Seniors: don't make these common mistakes!

### MISTAKE #1:

65-year-old couple added their son's name to the deed on their home

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Son may go through divorce or bankruptcy, exposing parents' home to ex-wife and son's creditors

### MISTAKE #2:

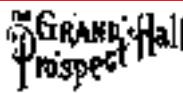
70-year-old woman becomes ill and needs to enter a nursing home. She gives all of her assets to her children to qualify for Medicaid

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There is a three-year look back period. By making an outright transfer of assets, she does not avoid Medicaid's penalty period.

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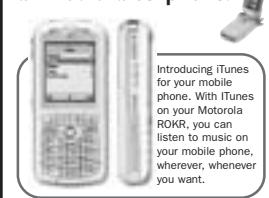
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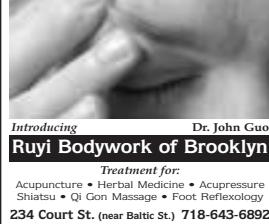


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# Cops search for Fulton St. slasher

By Lilo H. Stanton  
The Brooklyn Papers

A Fulton Street thug  
slashed a bystander with a  
box cutter at 12:14 during a  
bothered mugging attempt, police  
said.

The victim, 26, was on the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Fulton Street, at 3:50 pm when a stranger approached and tried to snatch the items in his hand, police said. The Sunnyside Park resident who, according to police reports, spoke Japanese, refused to leave his property — reported to police as six Japanese signs — the thug slashed the man and ran away.

The victim was treated at the nearby Brooklyn Hospital Center.

### Rob Hicks eats

Burglars struck a Hicks Street restaurant Oct. 14 after it closed for the night, police said.

An employee arrived at 11 am on Oct. 15 and discovered the security gate was pulled open and the door inside forced open, according to police. Once inside, the burglar snatched \$100 from the cash register.

Workers at the Chinese eatery, near Midagh Street, was closed up at 11 pm the previous night. The facility does not have cameras or an alarm, police said.

### No fare

An armed bandit robbed a livery cab driver in broad daylight on Oct. 14 as he waited for a passenger on Nassau Street, police said.

A dispatcher at the Atlantic

## Drive-by bandits rob Visiting Nurse

By Lilo H. Stanton  
The Brooklyn Papers

A thug jumped from a car to steal medical equipment from a nurse walking along Water Street on the morning of Oct. 13, police said.

The Visiting Nurse Service employee was heading back to her car at 9:45 am, after treating a client nearby, she told police. The nurse was between Gold and Bridge streets, in Brooklyn Heights, when a green car pulled alongside and someone rolled down the window, as if to ask a question.

Instead, a man leaped from the car and demanded repeatedly, "Give me your purse." When the victim delayed, the thug snatched her nurse's bag, hopped back into the car and sped away on Water Street. The victim, who had a license-plate number — went to her car and called 911.

The stolen items included a personal organizer, the victim's medication, an Erickson cell phone, a blood pressure monitor, a digital scale, a box of gloves, soap and other medical items. The thief also got copies of a patient's medical records, police said, and a "pen-tablet" computer, a high-tech model the nursing organization adopted in the mid-1990s to help improve

### Ride-by mugging

By Lilo H. Stanton  
The Brooklyn Papers

A man walking on Dean Street the night of Oct. 9 was robbed at knife-point by a bandit with a bandana masking his face, say police.

The victim, 19, told police he was walking home from the Pacific Street subway station on Fourth Avenue, when he was attacked, just after 11 pm, by a masked stranger who rode up on a bicycle. The mugger demanded the man leave his bike with a friend, and then confronted the man with a knife.

"Give me everything right now, give me [expletive] your money," he demanded. The victim turned over his wallet and the mugger got back on his bike and fled west on Fourth Avenue.

The victim said the mugger was riding a black mountain bike and displayed a black-handled dagger, police said.

## 84/76 PRECINCT

The Avenue car service sent the driver, 22, for a pickup outside the Farragut Houses public housing complex, between Gold and Navy streets, going to Bedford Avenue, police said. When the driver reached the block, at 2:20 pm, a man asked him to wait while his mother came downstairs.

Suddenly the man jumped inside the car and pulled a gun, police said. When the driver refused to give up his property — reported to police as six Japanese signs — the thug slashed the man and ran away.

The victim was treated at the nearby Brooklyn Hospital Center.

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A dispatcher at the Atlantic

open and his 27-inch TV — valued at \$200 — was gone.

**Mystery murderer**  
A man was found dead inside a Red Hook public housing project on the evening of Oct. 15, according to police.

Police are searching for both the killer and a motive in the murder. The gunman entered the apartment complex on Columbia Street, north of Loraine Street, around 8:45 pm and shot the victim, 21, in the head, neck and back, police said.

The victim was rushed to Long Island College Hospital where he was pronounced dead less than an hour later.

### Cellar dweller

A Wyckoff Street resident discovered signs of a burglar in her basement, but nothing serious.

Police said someone got inside the cellar of the condominium, near Nevins Street, sometime after 5 pm on Oct. 14. At 10 am the next day, a third-floor resident went to the basement and found a basement door had been forced open, the door jamb and the lock on the door jambmed. The building's tenants did not hear the intruder and did not report anything stolen, police said.

### Quick thief

A man struck a Van Brunt Street apartment and left a tenant left for half an hour shortly before dawn on Oct. 12, police said.

The resident, 22, told police he left his apartment building, 10 King Street, around 4:30 am until 5 am. When he returned, he found the front door of his apartment wide

open and his 27-inch TV — valued at \$200 — was gone.

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The resident, 22, told police he left his apartment building, 10 King Street, around 4:30 am until 5 am. When he returned, he found the front door of his apartment wide

open and his 27-inch TV — valued at \$200 — was gone.

**Mystery murderer**  
A man was found dead inside a Red Hook public housing project on the evening of Oct. 15, according to police.

Police are searching for both the killer and a motive in the murder. The gunman entered the apartment complex on Columbia Street, north of Loraine Street, around 8:45 pm and shot the victim, 21, in the head, neck and back, police said.

The victim was rushed to Long Island College Hospital where he was pronounced dead less than an hour later.

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# Concerns over Gowanus development

By Ariella Cohen

Brooklyn Paper

A plan to convert a former factory on the Gowanus Canal into an apartment building has area residents, businesses and community board members up in arms.

At issue is not just concern that industry will push out of the canal area, although that seems to be the greater worry based on community com-

ments, but also that remediation of the long-polluted soil will not be properly handled.

Lingering questions about the zoning variance application to allow developers convert 255 Baltic St., into a 53-unit residential apartment building delayed a Sept. 29 vote on the matter at a hearing before the Community Board 6 Land Use committee. That panel will revisit the topic this Thursday, Oct. 27, at 6 pm, at the St. Mary's Residence, 41

First St., between Hoyt and Bond Streets, and is expected to make a recommendation to the full board.

At the previous hearing, community members argued that the conversion would jeopardize the area's industrial character by setting a precedent for residential development—planting the seeds for

disputes over workday noise and grime in an area that is rezoned exclusively for manufacturing, based around the long-polluted canal.

"The conversion opens the argument that residential is the direction the canal is taking," said Maureen Donnelly, a member of the group Friends and Neighbors of Greater

Gowanus. The Land Use Committee voted in favor of such a variance once before, approving an application to rezone 460 Union St. against opposition from neighbors who petitioned to keep the site zoned for manufacturing.

In March, CB6 hosted a similarly contentious public

meeting between community members and the planning board, which is a 450-unit residential development slated to rise on land bounded by Carroll Street, First Street, Third Avenue and the muddy waterway's Lateral Canal, also known as the First Street basin.

On both that project — a

former fuel processing plant and the one proposed for Butler Street, Donnelly's group argued that ground pollution incurred over decades of industrial use must be remediated before residential plans are put forward.

"We are putting the cart before the horse," said Donnelly. "By putting residential development here now will be stepping in the way of [environmental restoration] projects."

In 2000, The Army Corps of Engineers began a feasibility study assessing how to best clean and restore the contaminated channel. While the cleanup is expected to be completed this year, the Army Corps is still finishing its testing of the soil.

But in the end, The Army Corps hopes to restore wetlands, remove parts of the canal and dredge the waterway's contaminated silt.

"We are looking to restore aquatic communities," said Thomas J. Shea III, project manager for the Army Corps.

"A lot of what happens on the land won't affect the sediment life, but we are interested in knowing where those projects are so we can build accordingly."

So far, community groups have precious little of either cleanup efforts or development plans.

"Everything with the Gowanus plans has been quiet, quiet, quiet," said Maria

Pagano, president of Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association.

"Part of our frustration with the cleanup process is that we don't hear from the state [Department of Environmental Conservation] directly," said CB6 district manager Craig Hammernick.

In July, CB6, through its Brownfield Cleanup Program, approved Gowanus Village 1 LLC's plan to clean the site of the former power plant west of Third Avenue between Carroll and Third streets. Under the DEC Brownfields Cleanup program, the development group, a partnership that includes developer Shaya Boymelgreen and Africa-Israel Investments principal Lev Levitt, will be reimbursed by the state for 15 percent of their testing and cleanup costs.

Another Brownfields application, for a site at 430 Carroll St., is now under review by the DEC.

On Oct. 14, the public review and comment period for the Gowanus Village abatement plan was extended another 30 days after complaints by members of FROGG that the information had not been made properly accessible.

Plans for the Gowanus are available for viewing at the Brooklyn Public Library's Carroll Gardens branch, at 336 Clinton St., and at the CB6 offices, 250 Baltic St., until Nov. 14.

## Seniors: don't make these common mistakes!

### MISTAKE #1:

65-year-old couple added their son's name to the deed on their home

### Here's Why:

Son may go through divorce or bankruptcy, exposing parents' home to ex-wife and son's creditors

### MISTAKE #2:

70-year-old woman becomes ill and needs to enter a nursing home. She gives all of her assets to her children to qualify for Medicaid

### Here's Why:

There is a three-year look back period. By making an outright transfer of assets, she does not avoid Medicaid's penalty period.

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Condo conversions are taking place throughout the area as property owners look to get equity without increasing their debt or selling the building.

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**Raphael & Marks** is a law firm that specializes in real estate and has done numerous condo projects in brownstone Brooklyn.

Information session will be held on Wednesday, October 26 at THE MONTAUK CLUB (8th Avenue & Lincoln Place) from 6:30 - 8:30pm.

To confirm, call Tonya Martin at (917) 586-8835.  
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# Masked bandit in Dean Street knife-mugging

By **Lilo H. Stanton***The Brooklyn Papers*

A man walking on Dean Street, the night of Oct. 9 was robbed at knifepoint by a bandit with a bandana masking his face, say police.

The victim, 19, told police he was walking home from the Pacific Street subway station on Fourth Avenue, when he was attacked, just as he was about to make a change of ride up on a bicycle. The mugger dismounted and leaned the bike against a fence, and then confronted the man with a knife.

"I'm going to get your money," the mugger demanded.

The victim turned over his wallet and the mugger got back on his bike and fled westbound on Fourth Avenue.

The victim described the robber as a dark-skinned man, about 5 feet 9 and 150 pounds, with dark, short hair, wearing a white shirt and black pants. The mugger was riding a black mountain bike and displayed a black-handled dagger, police said.

**Nab 'cut' crew**

Police arrested a quartet of teenagers, including a 16-year-old boy, who cut to rob a Queens man early on Oct. 11, police said.

The victim, 28, said he was surrounded by the four teenagers at 1:50 a.m. as he walked on Carroll Street, between Fourth and Fifth avenues.

One flashed a gray box cutter and threatened to slash him, while another punched him in the face and snatched \$300 from his pocketbook.

Police tracked the four suspects and the victim identified them as the men that mugged him. Police arrested the four — ages 15, 16, 17 and 18 — on felony robbery charges.

**Mystery DOA**

Police don't yet know what killed a man whose body they discovered floating in the river Oct. 18 at a Sunset Park pier.

The victim, described as an Asian man, was discovered around 11:40 a.m. according to police. The coroner pronounced "dead on arrival" and removed from Pier 4, at 58th Street and First Avenue, by the NYPD's harbor unit.

Detectives with the 72nd Precinct are also investigating.

**Purse snatched**

A thief grabbed a bag from a woman's hand midday on Oct. 12, and found himself pursued for half a block, police said.

The victim, 48, told police that at 1:20 p.m. she was walking on Eighth Avenue near Saint John's Park, when a mugger snatched her pocketbook. She chased him down

**72/78 PRECINCT**

Eight Avenue for nearly a block, but lost him on Flatbush Avenue, she told police.

The stolen purse included a wallet with credit cards, her driver's license, a checkbook, cell phone and charger, and a brokerage firm identification card.

**Bad trip**

A burglar struck a Plaza Street West home and made off with \$7,000, police said.

The victim, 29, told police he left his home between Fourth and Fifth avenues for work at 11:30 a.m. When he returned, at 3:50 p.m. he noticed his front door was broken and the house was in disarray. Nothing other than the cash appeared to be missing, police said.

**Tools snatched**

A burglar stole hand tools — and a machete — from a Union Street home, police said.

A resident, 26, told police he had locked the basement door of the two-story Plaza Avenue home at 8 p.m. on Oct. 10. He left, and when he returned, at 7:45 a.m. the next day, he found the door had been kicked in and the tools were missing.

Police said the stolen items were valued together at \$375.

## Senior crushed by bus in Ridge

*The Brooklyn Papers*

An elderly woman was killed on Bay Ridge Avenue Saturday afternoon after she tripped into the path of a city bus, say police.

The driver of the westbound B1 bus was likely oblivious to the fact that he had struck the woman and kept on going after he rolled over her. A local business closed down the bus.

The victim, 85, whose name was not released at press time, was walking along Bay Ridge Avenue near Third Avenue, around 2:40 p.m., when he appeared to trip and topple into the street, said police.

The businessman, Rafael Rosario, 45, said he was leaving his restaurant when he saw the accident, according to news reports. He jumped into his truck, flagged down the bus driver and then called 911.

The driver, 48, was not charged in the accident. Police said the victim was rushed to Lutheran Medical Center, where she was pronounced dead roughly 10 minutes after the accident. —*Stanton*

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**Brooklyn:**

# Here's the dirt on free compost.

**(And how to get a \$70 compost bin for \$20.)**

The NYC Department of Sanitation – in conjunction with Compost Project staff at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden – is giving away free, high-quality compost!

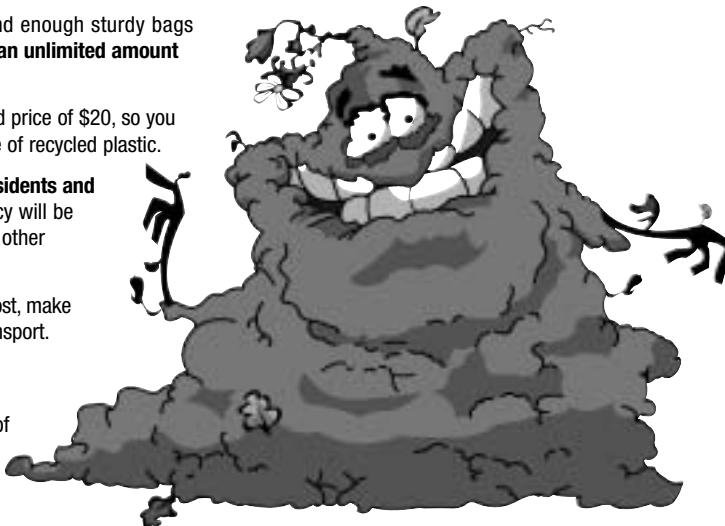
If you're a City resident, just bring a shovel and enough sturdy bags (such as sand bags) or containers to take away an unlimited amount of free compost.

We're also selling compost bins at the subsidized price of \$20, so you can make your own compost. The bins are made of recycled plastic.

Free compost and subsidized bins are for **NYC residents and NYC community groups only** (proof of residency will be requested; sorry, no commercial landscapers or other businesses allowed).

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**Times:** 8am - 2pm

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**From the Jackie Robinson (Interborough) Parkway:** Take the Jackie Robinson (South/West) to Exit 1 (bear left) • follow signs for Pennsylvania Avenue • take Pennsylvania Avenue approximately 2 miles to Flatlands Avenue • turn LEFT onto Flatlands Avenue • go approximately 1.2 miles to the middle of the block past Fountain Ave • turn RIGHT into the Spring Creek Composting Facility.

**For More Information:** • Visit the **New York City Compost Project** website at [www.nyccompost.org](http://www.nyccompost.org)  
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# Kids and communication: One tough combination

Q: My 5-year-old son has started misbehaving. I want to know all about his day, and he acts like he cannot remember anything about it.

— a mother

A: This reticent new student has made a couple of comments to his mother: "My teacher teaches too much." And, "Mom, please stop talking!"

The after-school silent treatment is typical. Parents, participants of the program, want to know everything, while kids want to get on with a snack and downtime.

Listen to your child when he says he needs quiet time. Don't badger him into talking. Give him a break from school conversations and allow him to either or even bed. Parents find those more relaxed times are when your child is more likely to be ready to share something about his day.

If you know specifics about other kids in the class or your child's schedule, you can ask more focused questions, such as, "What book did the librarian read today?" or "Was your favorite book about India?"

Psychologists also suggest that children thrive in a home environment where they feel it's OK to talk about their feelings without getting emotional.

## Parent-to-Parent

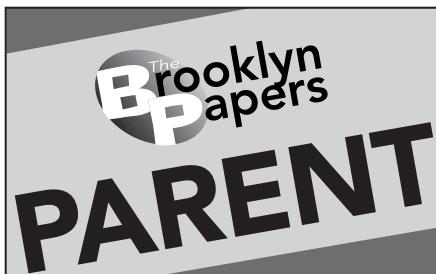


By Betsy Flagger

ally bashed, or told, "You don't really hate school even though you say you do."

For many kids, starting a new school is exciting, yet challenging. Parents can help ease the child's transition by staying involved and communicating with the teachers, says Alison Miller, PhD, a developmental psychologist at Bradley Hospital in Providence, R.I., the nation's first psychiatric hospital for children.

"When a child knows that his or her parents are taking the time to familiarize themselves with the new school, it can go a long way in boosting self-confidence," she says.



Also, parents who are familiar with the school environment and after-school activities can be invaluable resource. Miller emphasizes that having a close and well-informed connection between home and school is important for a child's adjustment and success.

"Volume in the classroom

or on class trips if possible," she suggests. "Or if you could, provide any special supplies that would make your child feel prepared and more included."

Just as with kids who don't want to talk about school, new kids on the block need a home environment in which they can talk about their positive and negative feelings about the new school, Miller says.

It may take a few weeks or months for new kids to feel comfortable in their new school. That parents do not dismiss their concerns, she says. Excessive complaints of illness on school days, trouble sleeping, or bed wetting can be signs your child needs more help to adjust.

TEACHERS: If you have chatterboxes in your class,

snapping at them to be quiet will not solve the talking problem, according to resources published by The Master Teacher. The Web site is [www.masterteacher.com](http://www.masterteacher.com).

Instead of disrupting the class, teachers talk at each individual to try to curb their behavior. Let them make class announcements, present oral reports and work in groups. Give them questions ahead so they can plan their answers.

Other "Master Teacher" tips about how to deal with talkers: Make frequent eye contact. When the student is talking, walk toward his or her desk. And seat the talker near quiet and serious students.

At the dinner table, parents can encourage their children to take turns talking without interrupting.

## Can you help?

"I don't know what to tell my 4-year-old son about where his missing father is, and some other relatives who did not accompany him. New Orleans. Should I tell him his father has gone to work or something? He keeps asking about him and is agitated."

— A New Orleans evicue

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FCC, although they acknowledge that there are antennas near a rooftop near such antennas could be harmful over time.

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene last year studied the long-term effects

of nextel officials did not return seeking comment for this article.

In studies done by the American Cancer Society between 1989 and 1996, no clear link was found linking cancer or other bodily harm to cell phone use or antennas emitting radio frequencies in amounts approved by the

problem is bigger this year. It seems to rise and fall with the year. The food source is a big part," said Liam Kavanagh, a Parks Department deputy commissioner. "If people are leaving their trash in plastic bags on the street, the rats gnaw right through and it's a buffet."

Added Weber, "If there is a slice of pizza up the block, they are going to eat that, not the poison."

"I don't know why the rat

## RAT PACK...

Continued from page 1

workers of all kinds hovering about, munching rat-shaped gummy candies or gazing at the big blow-up rat organizers had to leave from a local convenience store.

"It's the first of the problem I've heard of here, but I can't say I am shocked," said a police officer standing off to the edges of a "Rat Relay Race," that involved toy rats.

"I don't know why the rat

## CRIME...

Continued from page 1

spoke. "That's the way you use forces more efficiently," Lewis said. Since Sfernza grew up in the neighborhood, he also benefits from local knowledge. Lewis' son, a police officer, is deployed there, and he's a good guy to do it because he knows the turf.

So far this year, police in the 84th Precinct have seen the number of incidents in the category of burglary drop by a drop of more than 31 percent through Sept. 25, compared to last year's numbers. For Sept. 19-25, burglary reports were down one-third from the same week in 2004.

Lewis said that in addition to police patrols, revitalized Block Watch programs and "sensible" actions of residents — like leaving an outdoor light on — have helped deter burglaries and break-ins.

"There's been a lot of everything with the quality of life thing that Giuliani started," Lewis said, referring to a crackdown on non-violent crime promoted by the former mayor.

Judy Stanton, executive director of the Brooklyn Heights Association, said she has heard little about break-ins and burglaries in her neighborhood this year, but added, "I do think I'm seeing more graffiti."

CompStat targets the seven major violent crime groups and does not reflect changes in quality-of-life incidents, such as graffiti and other property vandalism.

Other Brooklyn neighborhoods also saw steep declines in crime reports during the week of Sept. 19-25, in the 76th Precinct, violent crime reports dropped more than 47 percent from figures for the same week last year. But from January through Sept. 25, crime reports have crept up 2 percent from the same period the previous year.

The 88th Precinct, in Fort Greene, logged a 32 percent drop in crime reports the week of Sept. 19-25 and reports are down nearly 4.5 percent for

the year.

The 78th Precinct, in Park Slope, recorded a 16 percent decline for that week and a drop of just over 2 percent for the year, compared to 2004 figures.

Overall, crime reports for the year are down nearly 5 percent citywide.

"In my neighborhood," said Lewis, who lives in Boerum Hill, near two public housing projects, "every single night there were guns going off — but no more."



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## CELLS...

Continued from page 1

that they won't force the issue," said Michael Nevel, president of the Catholic school's PTA and the mother of an eighth-grade student at the school.

The next day, St. Aloysius' attorney Lance Lazzaro, who first met with Nevel and several other parents from constructing the antennas, got a temporary restraining order halting construction.

"Clearly, when the permits

were issued there was a notice requirement to the school. The owner never gave notice and just went ahead and put the order up," he said.

When the city came forward we'll

have to prove the real danger of the antennas," said Lazaro.

Deutsche Telekom's company's

plan for Park Slope, Ross

Stromberg, T-Mobile's senior

development manager for the

northeast, told The Brooklyn

Papers. "This is a well estab-

lished process. It's really no

different than a real estate office space.

Obviously, the risks and

danger associated with cell

phone base stations and anten-

nas is well known," he said.

Both the Bay Ridge case

and that of the Concerned

Shareholders in Park Slope

involve disputes over

contractual agreements. Yet, hazy

understanding of the risks and

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October 22, 2005 THE BROOKLYN PAPERS BWN 7

## CB2 seeks emergency volunteers

By Ariella Cohen  
*The Brooklyn Papers*

Citizens, prepare to save the day.

The city's Office of Emergency Management is asking Community Board 2 residents to step up and be trained as first responders in the case of a disaster.

"We have bridges. We have Borough Hall. We have a lot of things that are targets in the community board," said Herman Schaffer, OEM's community outreach and disaster education coordinator, at a meeting Tuesday of the 84th Precinct Community Council.

The OEM official outlined the steps needed to create the first Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in the city, which will include Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, DUMBO, Boerum Hill, Fort Greene and Clinton Hill.

Initiated by the state Senate Committee on Homeland Security in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, CERT is a community board-based program that trains volunteers to respond to emergency situations.

"If disaster strikes at 1 pm or 10 pm, we want people out there in the streets sharing knowledge," Schaffer said. "This is readiness. This is why schools have fire drills."

Over a period of three months, CERT volunteers will participate in three-hour seminars on fire safety, light search and rescue, basic triage and teamwork, taught by city firefighters, police officers and representatives of the Red Cross.

"For example, for people who can't jump out of buildings," Schaffer said, assuring a member of CB2 that no one over the age of 18 would be turned away. "We want the teams to be as diverse as the neighborhoods."

Upon completion of training, participants will be certified as team members with an

identification card and reflective gear including a helmet and a vest.

"There will be links that connect each team back to the city and the workers will recognize who is legitimate in case there is a disaster situation," said Schaffer.

The OEM intends to establish CERT in each of the city's 59 Community Councils by 2007.

The first CERT was created in CB10's Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights and Bensonhurst district shortly after 9-11. By January 2002, CB10 had established its team and training had begun with volunteers learning how to respond and practicing fire rescue skills with life-sized mannequins and wooden pallets.

"After the ferry crash in Staten Island, we got called over to the Staten Island Airport, where all the people getting off the boat were being sent for transportation back to Staten Island. We were a big asset because we could lead them through the neighborhood, show them where the firehouse is," said Chip Cafaro, a member of the CB10 CERT.

"When we got there, there was only one policeman around," he noted, commenting on the rapid response capability of Community residents.

Cafaro recently watched as a fifth crew of volunteers graduated from the program in his district.

In CB2, the response to CERT has been far less enthusiastic.

Lost July, CB2 district manager Robert Perris enclosed a notice of CERT training in his monthly report and by the close of the summer, had heard back from only three people.

"I thought that perhaps after [Hurricane] Katrina, there would be a flood of calls from See TRAINING on page 18

## RATNER...

*Continued from page 1*  
my Assembly colleagues, including Speaker Sheldon Silver, not to support it."

She finished her tirade, which was boozed by the project supporters in attendance, by saying, "The size and magnitude of the project is unacceptable to us as a people." But Ratner has prided herself on being a development corporation that listens to community concerns, but I have yet to see an adequate plan for solving the potentially harmful problems that this project will create."

"Three minutes," the project's proponents often yell out toward the end of testimony by Millman and other elected officials who spoke critically of the project, referring to the standard time limit given to speakers. But they were often shouted down by opponents of the project, who held up signs that read, "Ratnerville Uninhabitable" or "Never a project like this again."

Many of the Atlantic Yards backers were construction-trade union leaders or members of volunteer groups that have signed an agreement with the developer that will grant them employment or monetary benefits in exchange for their support.

The project would include high-rise residential towers and office buildings on superblocks separating Prospect Heights and Fort Greene, east of the junction of Flatbush and Atlantic avenues. A portion of the site would house an arena for the New Jersey Nets professional basketball team owned by Ratner.

After Millman's testimony, Brooklyn Heights-Park Slope City Councilman David Yassky offered his support of the development to a member of the audience, adding, "It looks like a great ride."

"Taxpayers should not subsidize the arena," Yassky said. "Of course, the city has a role when it comes to affordable housing, but we should not be subsidizing the arena project."

As soon as the project site was approached the podium, a project supporter yelled, "OK, time to go."

James has been the most vocal elected official opposed to the project since it was proposed in December 2003.

"These people no longer believe trees should grow in Brooklyn, but they do believe in themselves, how clumsy the developer is, how useless the open space," James said.

Her former employer, Assemblyman Roger Green, meanwhile, spoke about what he called a "pervasive re-segregation" of Downtown Brooklyn, which he argued would be righted by the affordable housing units in the project.

"When we get there, there is only one policeman around," he noted, commenting on the rapid response capability of Community residents.

James said, "We created a community benefits agreement and I think we've raised the bar for how to do affordable housing," he told a reporter outside Tuesday's public hearing on the project. "We have a long tradition as a community."

Project opponents have called the BUILD funding a "payoff" for the group's support and have decried the CBA as giving the impression that the "community" supports Ratner's plan.

Though initially BUILD denied having received the funding, and Forest City denied paying it, Stuckey on Wednesday released a statement confirming funding commitments both to BUILD and to the CBA.

"Forest City Ratner is 100 percent committed to meeting the targets in the CBA and that means we will have to partially fund many of these programs," Stuckey said in the statement.

He said BUILD had received \$100,000 for "project implementation" and had twice been paid \$38,000 by the company to distribute Ratner's promotional tabloid, The Brooklyn Standard.

The Rockaway Democratic Neighborhood Alliance, which signed the agreement and who, along with the Brooklyn Heights-Park Slope Neighborhood Alliance, will be commissioned to help create an intergenerational center as part of the Ratner plan, received \$50,000, the statement read, to "retain staff to begin to develop a program to create these facilities."

## CASH...

*Continued from page 1*

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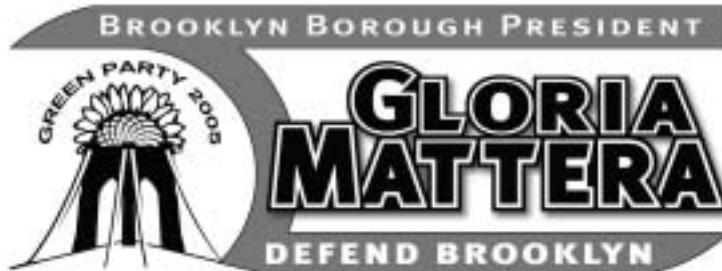
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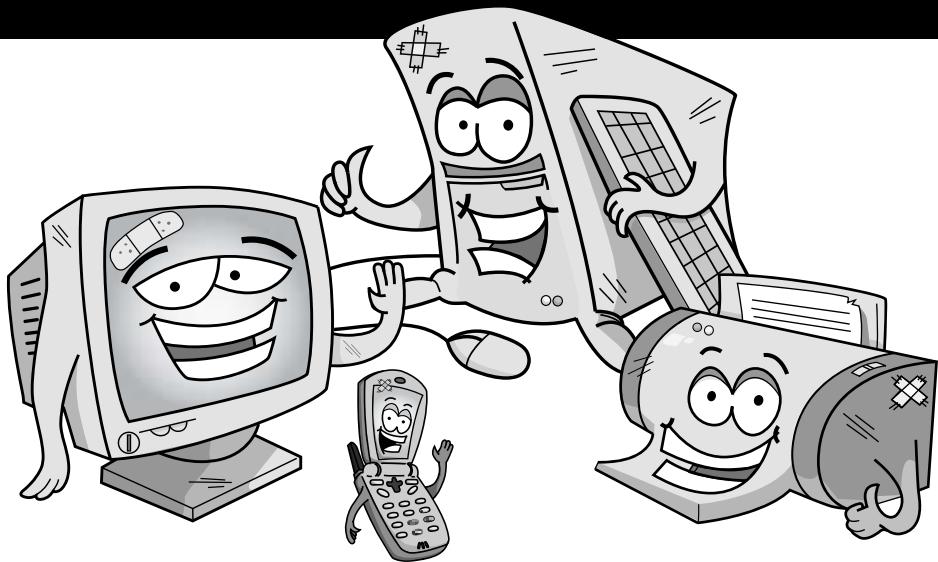
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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

October 22, 2005

# Farm fresh

*Latest crop of French films to be shown in Fort Greene*

By Marian Masone  
for The Brooklyn Papers

If the leaves are falling, it must be time for another edition of "New French Connection" at the BAM Rose Cinemas. This annual series of recent films includes two veterans and two up-and-coming filmmakers presenting their sophomore efforts.

The program begins on Oct. 26 with a new documentary from Raymond Depardon, who BAM honored with a retrospective just last year. In that retrospective, Depardon's film on farm workers, "Profils de l'agriculture" (looked at as "Profils de l'art" in "An Introduction") examined an agricultural community and its place in the current world order.

With the New York premiere of his new film, "Profils payssans: le quotidien" ("Profiles of Farmers: Daily Life"), he revisits those subjects to find them still struggling. Since this year, many groups may be divided and others have died, but there is a new generation of farmers trying to make local agriculture appealing to the European Union.

Showing with this film is Depardon's short film, "What's New at the Depardon?" ("Quoi de neuf au Depardon?") His first and second feature films will be presented in the series, as will his documentary "Kings," whenever he's paying homage, or strongly influenced (or both), will be up to the viewer to decide.

One of these French filmmakers, Jérôme Bonnell, will journey to Fort Greene to talk about his work on Oct. 28. Bonnell's first and second feature films will be presented in the series, as will his documentary "Kings."

"Le Chignon d'Olga," Bonnell's debut film, concerns the maturing of a young man, but it is really a coming-of-age story for his entire family—or at least what's left of it. The story begins about a year after Julien's mother has died. The younger struggles, along with his father Gilles, and his sister Emma, in ways sweet and tender to come to terms with their lives in the area around Chartres.

Julien develops a crush on a bookstore clerk (the Olga of the film's title) and does all of those silly things a teen boy does to try to get the girl. His father, meanwhile, is having trouble with his writing and his love life. And



## CINEMA

The "New French Connection" film series will be shown at BAM Rose Cinemas, 365 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene Oct. 26-30. Tickets are \$10 and \$7 for students and younger (with valid ID). Monday through Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sundays, Children younger than age 12, and BAM Cinema Club members. For a complete schedule, visit [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org) or call (718) 638-4100.

Emma, of course, becomes the mother to this crew, but she wants love as well.

Bonnell's treatment of his characters bears a resemblance to the work of Eric Rohmer ("My Night with Regret," "My Night with Regret"). Whether he's paying homage, or strongly influenced (or both), will be up to the viewer to decide.

Bonnell will make his appearance at BAM after the 6:50 pm screening of his second film, "Les yeux clairs" ("Pale Eyes"). This film goes into the life of a usually disturbed young woman (the nature of her illness is never made clear) living in provincial France with her brother and sister-in-law.

Fanny's emotions are generally over the top, whether it's happiness or anger. And her brother's wife really gets on her nerves. When Fanny discovers her having an affair, she takes off for Germany, where her father

is buried. Before Fanny gets to the grave, however, she meets a recluse who doesn't speak French, while she can't speak German. But between them they manage to work out a system of communication and possibly beginnings of a relationship. There's a sweet charm to "Les yeux clairs" — Bonnell even references Charlie Chaplin — that makes it a tender comedy drama, rather than a slapstick farce.

Bonnell made three short films prior to "Le chignon d'Olga" and "Les yeux clairs." It's a shame they can't be seen as well. This would be a great opportunity to see a young filmmaker's entire body of work in just a couple of days.

Like Bonnell, Jean-Pierre Denis has made two feature films, but only his second, "La petite chartreuse," will be shown in "New French Connection." Based on a novel by Pierre Péjá, it features a gripping performance by the usually splendid Olivier Gourmet, who has won acting awards at the Belgian Film Festival for his work with the Belgian Dartois Film. Gourmet's character is a deeply alcoholic with a steel trap of a mind. In fact, he remembers every word he has every read, and it helps in his job as a book dealer.

The Chartreuse in the title, is in fact the name of a mountain near Grenoble, where the film takes place. In the same city lives a single mother unable to fully focus on her young daughter.

When she forgets to pick up her daughter from school one day, the little girl panics and runs into the street — right into the car driven by Gourmet. While the girl lies in a coma, it becomes his spot at redemption. He takes on the responsibilities that her mother is

rather unable to deal with. While the story is a moving one, it is Gourmet's performance that is worth the price of admission.

Both films are available in many of the theaters in the series. The farm, obviously, is front and center in Depardon's films, and Bonnell's two films take place in the French provinces, while "La petite chartreuse" is set in the mountainous city of Grenoble. But Jean-Pierre Denis (not to be confused with Jean-Jacques Denis) takes it around the world — we're never exactly sure where except for one location — as she rewrites some cinematic rules in her daring latest feature "L'intrus" ("The Intruder").

Clarie Denis' film has been stripped down to its essentials, and it is a pleasure to watch, and it takes the better part of "L'intrus" for us to piece the story together. One day, an old man, who seems to have a heretic life, picks up a few things, leaves his dog behind, and takes off. Why? We don't know at this early point. We do know that he takes his money out of a bank and goes to a place somewhere in Asia. We also know that he has a son and that he becomes the core of the film — reconciliation. But not just of a man and his son, but of the past with the present and even the future.

Clarie Denis' films can be intense (look at "Friday Night" or "Best Travail" as examples of her work — subtle and provocative, but one need not be afraid of this one; it is not an exception. But they are beautifully shot and composed, and they are worth the mental effort one has to put in.

There may be only five feature films in this year's "New French Connection," but they are well-chosen. In this series, different styles are represented and taken together, these films give us a snapshot of the variety and range of current French cinema.

Marian Masone is the associate director of programming for the Film Society of Lincoln Center and chief curator of The New York Video Festival also at Lincoln Center.



## 'Mystery' ballet

Brooklyn Ballet makes its main-stage debut at Long Island University's newly opened Kumble Theater of the Performing Arts this weekend. The company's ethnically diverse nine-dancer cast will perform "Mystery Sonatas," a contemporary ballet choreographed by artistic director Lynn Parker.

The performance, developed through American sign language and Baroque dance variations translated into contemporary ballet," Parker told GO Brooklyn. The ballet is named for the music it is set to, Baroque composer Heinrich Biber's "Mystery Sonatas," which are performed live onstage by violinist Gil Mekler and pianist Cristina Stanescu. The Baroque choreography is by Thomas Band.

"Mystery Sonatas" alludes to scenes from Christ's birth, death and resurrection.

"The dance has spiritual overtones," said Parker. "It wrestles with religious meaning from a contemporary point of view. We're not depicting scenes from the Pas-

son, but scenes like birth, death, suffering and the condition of humanity are part of the expression of the piece."

The performance's costuming, which Parker describes as "eclectic, fanciful and contemporary," ranges from contemporary jeans to Baroque-style costumes to iconic images like modern day angels.

The performance on Oct. 22 and 23 at the Brooklyn Ballet School in DUMBO the next year. This month's performances mark the beginning of the company's first official season, although, over the last three years, Brooklyn Ballet has performed 10 times in public schools and has developed "Take Back to the Streets," a program that presents outdoor performances in the parks.

Performances are Oct. 22 at 8 p.m. and Oct. 23 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$40 for seniors, \$15 for students, \$10 for children. Kumble Theater is located on Long Island University's Brooklyn campus at 75 Dekalb Ave. at Flatbush Avenue in Downtown Brooklyn. To purchase tickets, call (718) 246-0146. — Lee Cabot Walker

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## ART



## Treasure map

Emerging Artists International's "NYC Citywide Open Studios Tour" shifts its focus to Brooklyn this weekend.

Participating studios will be open to the public, for free, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Oct. 22 and Oct. 23. Among the 331 Brooklyn artists participating this weekend, short-listed artist Sloper Judith Miller (pictured above), who says she has been making her "primal, totem-like and often whimsical carved staffs; one-of-a-kind, hand-carved walking sticks; and wearable art" for four years.

Miller's work will be on display in studio 1R, located at 446 Bergen St., between Fifth and Flatbush avenues.

Williamsburg artist Jennifer Delilah (whose 72-inch by 54-inch oil on canvas "Wild Horse, 3" is pictured right) will be showing her works in studio 309, located at 151 Kent Ave. at North Fifth Street.

"Forced into unnatural states, [animals and floral] stand in for the human animal, longing for freedom in cages of our invention and perception, artifacts of our destructive relationship with nature and ourselves with ourselves," Delilah says of her large-scale paintings.

For a complete list of participating artists, previews of their work and downloadable maps, visit [www.nycopenstudios.org](http://www.nycopenstudios.org).

Artists interested in learning more about Emerging Artists International, a nonprofit organization that "exists to support and encourage the nurturing of contemporary artists and enriching our culture through exposure to new art," according to founder Jesse Lambdin, can visit [www.isupportart.org](http://www.isupportart.org). — Lisa J. Curtis

## THEATER

## War horse



The Gallery Players are at it again ... with another timeless production.

In case you missed it the first several hundred times, the players are staging the world's longest running Off-Broadway play, "The Fantasticks," through Nov. 6.

"The Fantasticks" overcomes cultural barriers and brings to life the tale of two young people falling in love.

Gallery Players spokeswoman Katie Adams describes the musical as "a sweet, simple and universal story that can be enjoyed whether you're a child or an adult."

"The Fantasticks," which first opened on May 3, 1960, at the Sullivan Street Playhouse, is based on Edmond Rostand's play "Clownesques." The Gallery Players' production is co-directed by Dominic Cusken and Tina Marie Casamento.

Cusken told GO Brooklyn that he and Casamento had previously worked together on the Gallery Players' staging of "The Runaway Bride."

Their production of "The Fantasticks" promises to make for a memorable evening of theater.

"I had a wonderful cast and this is a wonderful piece," said Cusken, who also plays one of the lovers' fathers. "And when you have both of these elements, it is hard to mess up."

"The Fantasticks" opened at the Gallery Players on Oct. 15 and plays through Nov. 6 at 14th Street between Avenue C and Avenue B in Park Slope. Performances are Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for seniors and children, ages 12 and younger. For tickets and more information, visit [www.galleryplayers.com](http://www.galleryplayers.com) or call (212) 352-3101.

— Monestrat Cabral



**"I made a necklace all by myself. It has lots of pretty beads on it."**

**—Dounia**

Age 6, visitor to the Brooklyn Museum—New York, NY



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When 6-year-old Dounia went to the museum, she thought she'd see paintings. But on Target First Saturdays at the Brooklyn Museum, she not only discovered paintings and sculptures—she was also excited to find movies, Caribbean drumming and live music. Dounia's most special thing of all was a craft table where she could draw pictures and make her own jewelry with "all different colors on it."

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# Where to GO

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal

SAT, Oct 22

## OUTDOORS AND TOURS

**BOATING:** Pedal boat on Prospect Park Lake, \$10 per hour plus \$10 rental fee. Prospect Park, 2000 Wollman Rink, Enter Prospect Park at Parkside and Ocean avenues. (718) 638-8000.

**GREEN-WOOD TOUR:** Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment hosts a walking tour through historic Green-Wood Cemetery. Your is dedicated to finding as many of the city's most interesting individuals, \$11, \$9 members, \$8 seniors and students. 1 pm to 3:30 pm. Meet at the cemetery at 25th Street and Fifth Avenue. Call for ticket info. (718) 246-1146.

**WALKING TOUR:** David Foley of the Center for Urban Pedagogy leads an interactive walking tour of the historic Green-Wood Cemetery, about ongoing struggle over Brooklyn's infrastructure. 2 pm. Meet at the cemetery at 25th Street and Clinton St. (718) 875-4047. **Free.**

**PERFORMANCE**

**BRONX LYCEUM:** hosts "Electric Light Parade," a new documentary. Segments include Tony Silver's documentary "Ariaman," featuring the life of the controversial "Ariaman" exhibit. "The Art in Art and Music," \$10. 6 pm to 10 pm. 229 W. 181st St. (718) 965-8900.

**BARGEMUSIC:** Concert of classical music features The Teatro Olimpico. The program, which includes works by Vividal and Telemann, \$50. 7:30 pm. Fulton Center, 1000 Broadway, at the foot of the East River. (718) 624-2083.

**NEXT WAVE:** Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "The Great Gatsby" by Huppert in Sarah Kane's play "4,48 Psychos." \$25 to \$55. 7:30 pm. BAM, 30 Lafayette Ave. at Hoyt St. Alba Brazilian star Daniela Mercury performs "Caraval" (718) 636-4100.

**ROBESON THEATRE:** Play, "Cabiri-Greene," a play about the life of the world. "The Fantastics," \$15. 12 children under age 12 and seniors. 8 pm. 102 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

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**LAUGH IN:** Caribbean Club. **Free.**

**GALLERY PLAYERS:** presents the theater presents "Shorts," a variety show of short plays. \$8 per show. Oxford Center, 138 Oxford St. (718) 783-9770.

**THEATRE:** presents "Shorts," a variety show of short plays. \$8 per show. Oxford Center, 138 Oxford St. (718) 783-9770.

**HEARTBEAT PLAYERS:** presents the musical "Oklahoma." \$15. 12 children under age 12 and seniors. 8 pm. 26 Washington Ave. (718) 636-4100.

**CLASSIC ROCK:** Concert at The Wicked Monk. \$10 admission. 8 pm. 8415 Franklin Ave. (718) 921-3001.

**NEW DANCE:** Brooklyn Dance Exchange presents its Space Grant Showcase featuring an evening of

new dance, theater and performance. \$15, \$10 members, \$8 low-income. 6 pm. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 238-0189.

**DANCE:** The borough's own ballet company, Brooklyn Ballet, performs "Island University's Kumble Theater, 75 DeKalb Avenue at Flatbush Avenue. Call for ticket info. (718) 246-1146.

**CHILDREN**

**BRONX LYCEUM:** "The Great Pumpkin," kids, ages 2 to 5, are invited to explore the pumpkins, jack-o'-lanterns, \$4, free for members. 11 am to 12:30 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 965-8900.

**SATURDAY MATINEE:** Brooklyn Public Library, Central branch, invites kids to "The Great Pumpkin" with guide John Cashman. \$6. 1 pm to 3 pm. Meet inside Ft. Hamilton Park, 1000 Ft. Hamilton Avenue. (718) 238-0884.

**WILLIAMSBURG WALK:** NYU's *Neighborhood Watch* offers a walk around this neighborhood. 10 am to 12:30 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 965-8900.

**ARTY FAIR:** Brooklyn Museum offers a look at art with a studio project. Today, Art Fairs utilizes children's imagination and each collection. Appropriate for ages 4 to 12, \$8, \$4 seniors and students, free for members. 10 am to 4 pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 535-4000.

**CONCERT:** Brooklyn Symphony Orchestra presents "The Organ Symphony." 8 pm. St. Ann and the Holy Name Church, Montague and Clinton streets. (718) 238-0100.

**BAROQUE IN BROOKLYN:** Brooklyn Baroque performs on period instruments. 7 pm. Grace Episcopal Church, Avenue S and Brown Street. Call for ticket information. (718) 393-5337.

reads from his book "The Greatest Ballpark Ever: Ebbets Field and the Story of the Brooklyn Dodgers." Nov. 12, 7 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 636-4066.

**HUNTER'S MAZE:** Micro Museum hosts a pre-Halloween event and a silent auction. \$2, 2 pm to 6 pm. 100 St. (718) 875-0772.

**RECEPTION:** Space Gallery presents "Au Courant," a group exhibit. 6 pm to 9 pm. 1138 Broadway. (917) 766-0772.

SUN, Oct 23

## OUTDOORS AND TOURS

**GREENWOOD CEMETERY:** tour Green-Wood Points of Interest with guide John Cashman. \$6. 1 pm to 3 pm. Meet inside Ft. Hamilton Park, 1000 Ft. Hamilton Avenue. (718) 238-0884.

**WILLIAMSBURG WALK:** NYU's *Neighborhood Watch* offers a walk around this neighborhood. 10 am to 12:30 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 965-8900.

**ART TALK:** Clinton Hill Art Center presents "The Art of the Black United Front" with a tribute to Dave Walker, chairperson of the Political Alliance of the National Black United Front. 3 pm to 7 pm. 200 Clinton Hill Art Center. Call for ticket information. (718) 239-9329.

**DEMOCRATIC CLUB:** Brooklyn College presents "My American Girls: A Dominican Story." 10:30 am. Brooklyn College, 1000 Carroll St. (718) 768-0554.

**PEACE FAIR:** Brooklyn Parents for Peace present a 20th anniversary peace concert. \$20 to \$40. 7:30 pm. 230 38th Street, at Fourth Street. (718) 965-8900.

**NY TRANSIT MUSEUM:** kids, ages 4 to 16, are invited to "Miles of Ties," a scavenger hunt in Boerum Place and Schemerling Street. (718) 694-4000.

**OTHER**

**FEAR MARKET:** The Salvation Army presents "Fright." 6 pm to 3 pm. 252 86th St. (718) 238-2991.

**FAIR:** Brooklyn Friends School Shakespeare features emerging designers of handknit apparel. 1 pm to 4 pm. 157 Montague St. (718) 768-0554.

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**ROBESON THEATRE:** Play, "Cabiri-Greene," a play about the life of the world. "The Fantastics," \$15. 12 children under age 12 and seniors. 8 pm. 102 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

**LAUGH IN:** Caribbean Club. **Free.**

**GALLERY PLAYERS:** presents the theater presents "Shorts," a variety show of short plays. \$8 per show. Oxford Center, 138 Oxford St. (718) 783-9770.

**THEATRE:** presents "Shorts," a variety show of short plays. \$8 per show. Oxford Center, 138 Oxford St. (718) 783-9770.

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**CLASSIC ROCK:** Concert at The Wicked Monk. \$10 admission. 8 pm. 8415 Franklin Ave. (718) 921-3001.

**NEW DANCE:** Brooklyn Dance Exchange presents its Space Grant Showcase featuring an evening of

new dance, theater and performance. \$15, \$10 members, \$8 low-income. 6 pm. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 238-0189.

**DANCE:** The borough's own ballet company, Brooklyn Ballet, performs "Island University's Kumble Theater, 75 DeKalb Avenue at Flatbush Avenue. Call for ticket info. (718) 246-1146.

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**BAROQUE IN BROOKLYN:** Brooklyn Baroque performs on period instruments. 7 pm. Grace Episcopal Church, Avenue S and Brown Street. Call for ticket information. (718) 393-5337.

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SUNDAY - oct- 23

MONDAY - Oct 31

WEDNESDAY Oct 25

WEDNESDAY - 7

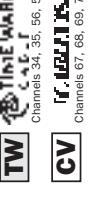
- ELEVEN DAV

HORNBLAST - Oct 27	
CV	9:00am - 9:30am
67	10:00am - 10:30am
68	11:30am - 12:00pm
69	12:30pm - 1:00pm
70	1:30pm - 2:00pm

FRIDAY - Oct. 28

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SATURDAY - Oct. 29



## Nightlife...

Continued from page 10...

suggested donation (donations are required).

### National Restaurant

227 Fulton St. at Second Street in Brooklyn Beach. (718) 644-1225; www.comerestaurant.com. Saturdays: Live Russian music and dance show, 9 pm, FREE. (with \$100 gift certificate). Sundays: Live Russian music and dance, 9 pm, FREE. \$50 pp. (with \$100 gift certificate). Sundays: Live Russian music and dance show, 9 pm, FREE.

**Night of the Cookers**

747 Fulton St. at South Portland Avenue in Fort Greene. (718) 782-1000. Saturdays: Live jazz, 10 pm, FREE. Sundays: Live jazz, 8 pm, FREE. Fridays: Live jazz, 10 pm, FREE.

### Northsix

606 Nostrand Ave. at Myrtle Avenue in Williamsburg. (718) 599-5103; www.northsix.com. Oct. 22: (Downstairs) Regulators, Career Suicide, Formally Unlikely, Arkestra, Splitting Image, 9 pm, \$10. (Upstairs) Arctic Monkeys, 9 pm, \$15. (Downstairs) Day of the show, Oct. 26: (Downstairs) Zach Hill/Kevin Shea duo, Sugarcubes, 8 pm, \$10. (Upstairs) Matt and Kim, 9 pm, \$8. (Upstairs) The Hives, 10 pm, \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door, 9 pm, \$15 advance, \$17 at the door. (Downstairs) The Rascals, 9 pm, \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door, Oct. 27: Hall Williams III, Lenny Kravitz, 9 pm, \$15 advance, \$17 at the door. (Upstairs) The Rascals, 9 pm, \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door, Oct. 28: (Downstairs) Oakley Hall, Dry Fences, Company, 9 pm, \$10. (Upstairs) The Rascals, 9 pm, \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door, Oct. 29: (Downstairs) Oakley Hall, Dry Fences, Company, 9 pm, \$10. (Upstairs) The Rascals, 9 pm, \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door, Oct. 30: (Downstairs) Benicio and the Party and Burlesque Extravaganza with Albadra, Battista, American DJ, DJ Ruckus, 9 pm, \$10. (Upstairs) The Rascals, 9 pm, \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door (costumes mandatory).

### Peggy O'Neill's

709 Nostrand Ave. at 8125 Fifth Ave. at 81st Street in Bay Ridge. (718) 748-1400; www.peggyoneill.com. Saturdays: DJ Rob and live music, 10 pm, FREE. Mondays: Karaoke, 9 pm, \$5. Tuesdays: Live Beer Pong, 9 pm, FREE. Wednesdays: Trivia, Night, 9 pm, FREE. Thursdays: Karaoke with DJ Rob, 9 pm, FREE. Fridays: DJ Rob, 9 pm, FREE. Saturdays: NFL Sunday, 1 pm, FREE. Mondays: Night Foodie, 9 pm, FREE.

### Pete's Candy Store

709 Lummis St. at Richardson Street in Williamsburg. (718) 363-3770; www.petescandystore.com. Sundays: Open mic, 5 pm, 8 pm, FREE. Oct. 22: Jim Flynn, 8 pm, \$10. Oct. 23: David Lee, 8 pm, \$10. Oct. 24: Dune, 11 pm, \$10. Oct. 25: Jason Myles Goss, 8:30 pm, \$10. Arielle, 9:30 pm, \$10. Oct. 26: Tim Andreea, 10:30 pm, \$10. Arielle, 11 pm, \$10. Oct. 27: D.J. Blane, 9 pm, \$10. Oct. 28: Trevor, 8 pm, \$10. Oct. 29: Brian Bergeron, 9:30 pm, \$10. Oct. 30: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 31: Karen Francis, 8 pm, \$10. Oct. 32: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 33: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 34: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 35: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 36: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 37: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 38: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 39: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 40: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 41: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 42: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 43: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 44: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 45: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 46: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 47: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 48: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 49: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 50: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 51: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 52: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 53: 2 pm, \$10. Oct. 54: 2 pm, \$10. 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W44

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W44

**Field Service  
Technician**

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GBC offers an excellent pay and benefits package, including dental, life and disability insurance, 401k, and much more. For consideration, send resume via fax: 847-291-5626, e-mail: [kathleen.niedenheuer@bcom.com](mailto:kathleen.niedenheuer@bcom.com) or apply online: [www.bcom.com](http://www.bcom.com). Under Commercial Products position, EOE F/F/D/V.

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Looking for a full-time Membership Sales Advisor to join our fitness company. Candidates must have strong interpersonal, communication and sales skills. Flexible hours are required, as well as, a comfort level with a salary plus commission. Excellent benefits and future career opportunities. Please send your resume to [recruit@thebodyguard.org](mailto:recruit@thebodyguard.org) for immediate consideration.

**Child Care Workers**

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# The Brooklyn Papers HOME IMPROVEMENT



# Rains overflow Gowanus

By Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Papers

With more than 12 inches of rain falling on the city last week, community activists reported major overflowing from the Gowanus Canal at two sewer overflow sites —

the Carroll Street Bridge and on Second Street at Sackett Street.

"We were there on Thursday about an hour before the evening high tide," wrote Andrew D'Amato, a member of the group Friends of Greater Gowanus Canal (FROGG), in an Oct. 15 e-mail. "At first the water

only came up 2 to 3 feet onto the street. As we were standing at Second Street the water continued to rise all around us, covering more than 20 feet of the cobblestone street."

The Gowanus was just one of dozens of asphalt banks to flood last week.

"We have extra crews on. The water has inundated and we are doing our best to get to all the flood sites," said Natalie Milner, a spokeswoman for the agency.

Milner could not confirm if inspectors had visited Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) sites on the Gowanus.

Added to the overflowing canal concerns was an Oct. 16 report by the watchdog group Riverkeeper, which found 1.5 billion gallons of untreated sewage reached beach cities and waterways by the end of the seven-day downpour.

According to the report, the City Department of Environment violated state and federal law by dumping raw sewage into the city's waterways through its CSO system.

When a sewage treatment plant reaches a point of overcapacity, a trigger releases excess sewer water into city-sanctioned overflow sites. Much to the chagrin of environmentalists, there are more than 460 such sites across the city, including the two along the Gowanus.

"We cannot allow the government agencies that levy fines and punish polluters to ignore the very laws they are

trusted to enforce," Councilman David Yassky wrote in a press release announcing the release of the Riverkeeper report. "How can we expect residents and businesses to follow the law when the city so flagrantly violates it?"

But a Riverkeeper spokesman said given the infrastructure there was little the city could do.

Spokesman Basil Seggos blamed the flooding on that familiar environmental villain, the concrete jungle.

"Without green area, there is simply nowhere for the water to flow."

# HEALTH, MIND & BODY

## ABORTION



The Brooklyn Papers • Tom Callan

## And the winners are...

Scelzo and Carpenter from Carroll Gardens

Alia Maria Scelzo, 32, and Frederick Adam Carpenter, 31, of Carroll Gardens, are the September winners of The Brooklyn Bride cruise-a-month giveaway, sponsored by Michael C. Fine.

The couple plans to be married on Jan. 7 at the Secrets Excellence Resort in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, with cocktails and ceremony on the beach, followed by the reception, featuring dinner and dancing, in the pool plane. They expect 60 guests to celebrate with them.

Scelzo and Carpenter decided to marry at the same location where they had particularly enjoyed a vacation within the past year.

"We just fell in love with the place," says the bride-to-be. "And it had always been our dream to be married on the beach."

Scelzo is the daughter of Angela Mascia and Thomas Scelzo, both of Staten Island. She attended Curtis High School on Staten Island, as well as SUNY-Oswego, where she earned a degree in studio art. She currently works as a sales representative for a liquor company.

The groom-to-be is the son of Frederick and the late Joyce Carpenter, of Wayne, Pa. Carpenter attended Carnegie Tech in Pittsburgh and then went on to Penn State to study business. He is employed as a sales representative by a medical software company.

### How did you meet?

The bride-to-be: "We were set up through members of our families. We were both single and our relatives just started talking about me when Rick was over. Someone brought some

photos as well, and he called me. We left it off on our first phone call and realized we had a lot in common."

"Our first face-to-face meeting was at my sister's wedding in September 2003. We started talking about our relationship for over a year. He lived two hours away in Pennsylvania, and I was here in Brooklyn. Every weekend one of us made the trip; [now] we know the Jersey Turnpike all too well. And we kept our relationship going during the week with lots of e-mails, minimeetings."

"We knew it was serious pretty early on; we just had to work out who was going to move where. Rick moved to Brooklyn in December of 2003."

### Who proposed, and how?

The bride-to-be: "Rick proposed, and it was a complete surprise to me. I had no idea he had bought me a ring. All our family and friends knew except me." Carpenter: "We were planning to go to a wine tasting when Rick called and asked me to drive over to Downtown Brooklyn and jump-start his car. Then he said we should go to the [Brooklyn Heights] promenade and take a look at his client's amazing apartment. It was time to go, and suddenly, he was searching for the apartment when all of a sudden he was down on one knee, shaking like a leaf and asked me to marry him. Our first date had been on the promenade. I was so excited, and of course, I said yes."

"Then we suggested we go for a quick celebratory drink close by, at Pete's Downtown. And just about everybody we knew was there!"

"Then he whisked me away in a



Alia Maria Scelzo and Frederick Adam Carpenter with their prize announcement.

limo the next morning to take us on a trip to Mexico to celebrate our engagement.

"I've never experienced anything so romantic in my life!"

### Concerns about the wedding?

The bride-to-be: "We are trying to have a Catholic ceremony, but it's proving really hard to work out. We're trying to make navigating the long distance, plus the resort tends to only use a local judge, so that's problematic as well. Then there is the language barrier!"

"We are also sad that some of our older relatives and friends with very young kids won't be able to make the trip."

To enter to win our October cruise giveaway, fill out the form below or visit [www.TheBrooklynBride.com](http://www.TheBrooklynBride.com).

To submit your wedding or engagement announcement, visit [www.TheBrooklynBride.com](http://www.TheBrooklynBride.com). Announcements are run on a space available basis. Our next issue is Nov. 19.

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**The Brooklyn Bride**

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## Win a honeymoon

Enter The Brooklyn Bride contest to win a 7-night cruise for two to the Caribbean or Mexican Riviera, sponsored by Michael C. Fina



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### Contest open to engaged couples & couples married since Jan. 1. Enter by Wed. Nov. 9.

Mail to: October Contest, The Brooklyn Bride, c/o The Brooklyn Papers, 55 Washington St., Ste 624, Brooklyn, NY 11201. ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY WED. NOV. 9. Or enter online at [www.TheBrooklynBride.com](http://www.TheBrooklynBride.com). ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY WED. NOV. 9.

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GROOM'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

WEDDING DATE (between January 1, 2005 and December 2007): \_\_\_\_\_

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CITY, STATE & ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DAYTIME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EVENING PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME AND RELATION OF PERSON SUBMITTING ENTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

□ BRIDE □ GROOM □ OTHER (SPECIFY) \_\_\_\_\_

to claim prize by completing, signing and returning an affidavit of eligibility and returning the completed entry form to the contest deadline. The decision of the The Brooklyn Papers judges is final.

7) At a time scheduled by The Brooklyn Papers, the winner will receive a certificate at a location designated by The Brooklyn Papers and pose for a photograph. The Brooklyn Papers reserves the right to use the photo in The Brooklyn Papers or any media. The photograph, and any other photo or video taken by The Brooklyn Papers, may be used in any media and in any manner — editorial, promotional, advertising and/or otherwise — by The Brooklyn Papers or any other person or entity.

8) The winner will receive a certificate valid for a 7-night cruise for two adults (double occupancy) to the Caribbean or Mexican Riviera. The cruise will be for the month of December.

9) The cruise will be provided by Mini Vacations Inc. who will be responsible for all travel arrangements.

10) The winner will be notified by phone, e-mail or mail on or before Friday, Nov. 11.

11) The winner will have three (3) days after notification to respond to The Brooklyn Papers and without compensation. Entries may be

denied and used in any manner deemed appropriate by The Brooklyn Papers.

12) The Brooklyn Papers and Michael C. Fina and Mini Vacations Inc. are ineligible to receive the cruise.

13) The winner will receive a certificate valid for a 7-night cruise for two adults (double occupancy) to the Caribbean or Mexican Riviera.

14) To be eligible for this offer, passengers must be 21 years of age or older with a valid Social Security number and a valid driver's license. Proof of age and valid driver's license are required at the time of travel.

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20) The winner should not leave for the cruise or receiving written confirmation of the cruise until the cruise has been paid in full.

21) An abnormal winner may be selected in the event of noncompliance with any of the cruise or travel arrangements.

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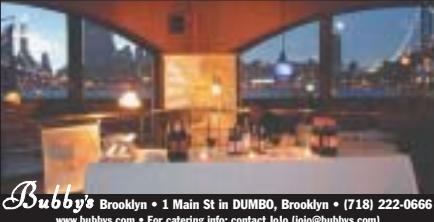
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# Dressed to kill

Good-humored bride-to-be battles insensitive saleswomen in 3-month search for ideal wedding gown

By Christina Cass

For The Brooklyn Papers

**I**t's the most romantic time of my life, and I can't stop crying.

I'm getting married soon, I'm crazy about a fantastic man and he's crazy about me.

Just me. Not me if I lost 20 pounds,

me if I was blonder or shorter or

wealthier or had a great butt.

And that's a shock. I've had a body and self-image problem for, well, let's say a really long time. But I've worked it all out now that I'm a 30-something, size 14-1D and in love.

Still, I'm tormented by myself and my fiance adores me just the way I am, so I was truly amazed when I found myself crying in the dressing room at a chic Westport, Conn. bridal gown shop.

I guess the pressure had been building up for months, and I started reverting back to my old self-sabotage. I'm the tough one, you know, keeping it all in until the pressure builds up so much that I need to leak a little out. Like a bottle of seltzer. It's either a slow fizz or a big explosion — depending on how I feel.

I really hadn't thought about my age until my fiance and I went to Pre-Cana (which is a required marriage preparation class in the Catholic Church).

My fiance leaned over to me and whispered, "I think we're the oldest couple in the room."

No. Surely at least one or two couples amongst the 50 here were our age or older?

Then we sat down with our monsignor. It was all lovely chitchat until he said, "It's really a pleasure talking to mature couples." Mature? Who me? Mature? Ha!

Or until my friend's mother heard I was engaged, and robustly said, "It's wonderful when any girl gets engaged, but it's especially beautiful when it happens to a woman later in life." What? Since when is late-30s "late in life"?

Or until someone asked me if I can still have kids. Where do

people come off asking that? Don't you know that I-THINK-ABOUT-IT-ANOTHER-TIME-NOW-THANK-YOU-VERY-MUCH?

I really hadn't thought about my weight again until I began looking for my wedding dress. I started at Kleinfeld in Bay Ridge, of course, which was the biggest place around to get a good idea of what's out there first, get a good idea of what's out there and then buy it discount somewhere else. (Hey, this is New York.)

My mom, my bridesmaids, my sisters and flower girls scattered like Pac-Man and上百 of dresses to my aid. It's wonderful to find other people there when you're looking for your wedding dress. You get a lot of variety, because your mother brings you a dress SHE thinks will be lovely on you, and then your best friend brings you what SHE thinks will be lovely on you. But you can lose sight of what YOU think will look good on you.

(So, I suggest that after one afternoon out with all your friends and family, you stick to just one person for the rest of the dress hunt. Only one. And then, if she needs to take on this awesome task — will know the full history of your search and be a true guide in the final decision. For me, that person was my patient, sharp-eyed, creative, sensitive mother.

After weeks of research with magazines, Martha and the Internet, I found that Monique Lhuillier was my designer. She made a dress that was absolutely me. So Mom and I were off to her show in swanky Westport. Maybe I can buy a sample? Yeah! Or at least get a trunk show discount!

Instead of the intimate, private surroundings I had at Kleinfeld (which has since relocated from Bay Ridge to Manhattan), I had to march out into the main showroom and stand on one of those red-carpeted walkways. The dress looked like me. Behind me were two couches from where brides' families and friends can view you. Or in my case, me and my bungee cords and clothes pins that were straining to keep my wedding dress somewhat strapped to my body.

As I'm standing with my backside hanging out for a showroom full of strangers, the saleswoman says, "Just imagine if it fit you! You'd look fabulous!" So I'm supposed to shell out \$2,000 (discounted to \$1,200 with the trunk show discount), because I have to use my imagination to see what the dress will look like on me?

Excuse me, but what if my imagination is WRONG?

"Well, you'll be surprised," says the saleswoman. "The dress is back in your body. There, see? Isn't that nice? Very classy." Problem was, I couldn't help looking over at a young wisp-of-

a-thing (who slid into her Monique Lhuillier without the aid of a crowbar) spinning around like Julie Andrews atop the mountain in "The Sound of Music."

"Oh, I wish I could be able to hear it! Oh, I wish I could be able to hear it!"

It's trying to concentrate on my own straining satin, squinting my eyes, trying to see myself in this dress that I adored in all the magazines.

My mom just pursed her lips.

"Well, maybe. But I just can't see it," she said.

I stepped down off my pedestal just avoiding Wisp Girl's swishing skirts and returned to my little peach room (behind a brocade curtain that surely wasn't soundproof) and to check the measurements of me.

This was supposed to be the happiest time of my life. I was shopping for my wedding gown that was supposed to make me feel like a princess — or at least Julie Andrews — and all I could do was cry.

After months of holding it in, I felt ugly and I felt old.

Just then, there was a rustle at the curtain, "Are you OK?" the saleswoman

asked.

"Yes, fine," I choked.

"Good, I need that dress, because this other bride wants to try it."

"Oh, I wish I could be able to hear it!"

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better off working with a friend of hers who made dresses for older women.

OK, that's it!

So back to Kleinfeld. Exhausted and fed up from every angle, I figured I'd go back to the boutique which offered a variety of dresses, separates, spangles and roomy chairs for me to sit in, water and Kleenex. I asked for Rita to help us again and she brought out the two dresses I had liked during my first trip. I held my breath, opened my eyes and they were horrible. Nothing like what I had imagined three months earlier.

But before the seltzer bottle bled, Rita asked a few more discreet questions ("What's the budget, honey?") and then disappeared. She came back with one dress.

"It's just like it," Rita assured me.

She slipped me into a sample that wasn't too tiny, and I turned around. Rita was right. This was the dress. A simple gown that I could wear and wouldn't wear.

I asked why she didn't show it to me the first time. She said, "Rita and I did, but she didn't like it that I had been blinded by labels, bling-bling and bows and pressured by a roomful of opinions (albeit loving ones, but nevertheless, not my own).

She brought in a well-made, the perfect veil, a bouquet, the dress for my mom and I both started weeping up.

But this time, because we were so happy, I wasn't going to have to wear my sweatpants down the aisle!

As I stepped back out of the room to get a better look at myself, I glanced to the right of me for just a moment — at another gorgeous young bride in the Lhuillier gown I had wanted for my own.

I looked at myself, smiled, straightened my shoulders and spun back into my own room.

Christina Cass is a Park Slope resident and has been living happily ever after since her Sept. 14 wedding.

The Brooklyn Bride continues inside ~ Win a honeymoon cruise!

